

A SELECTION OF ŠIRONGA FOLKLORE.

COLLECTED BY

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A cycle of stories about Nwampfundla, The Hare, from the Maputu country (South of Delagoa Bay).

Told by the late Samuel Mabika, in his youth a great warrior, a man of considerable importance in his tribe. With the smallest possible variation—everything in the tales cannot be translated—the stories are written down exactly as I heard them. It is, unfortunately, impossible to reproduce the vivacity, the interpretative gesture, the free use of "descriptive complements," and the very evident enjoyment of the stories shown by the narrator.

In his "Les Chants et les Contes des Baronga," and in his later work, "The Life of a South African Tribe," the Rev. H. A. Junod has given other forms of some of these stories, differing considerably in detail, and in the connection of the incidents, from the short series of tales as they were told to me. Perhaps a comparison of the different versions may be worth while, as helping to fix that typical form of the Hare stories characteristic of the BaRonga, which he desiderates on p. 198 of the latter work as a first step in a careful comparative study of the stories throughout the Bantu field.

N.B.—The Hare is, in the stories, called "Nwampfundla." "Nwa," literally "son of," is often used as an equivalent of our "Mr." Nwampfundla may, therefore, be translated "Mr. Hare."

I.

NWAMPFUNDLA AND THE LION.

Well, there was a lion with his family, his wife and four little lion cubs. And they were always hungry; so the lion, their father, used to go every day to hunt and to kill animals to feed his family. Now when he had killed a buck, he used just to eat the flesh, and throw all the other things away, because the lion thought, "Oh, I have no time to wash the things that are inside and to clean them so as to make them fit for eating." So the lion did every day.

Now one day, when the lions had just finished eating, the hare came and said to the lion, "Oh, lion, why do you throw all those things away; are they not good to eat?"

And the lion said, "Well my family are so busy; they are always busy. They like to eat and sleep. They do not want to wash those things and prepare them for eating. They say that it is not nice work for lions; but they do like to eat those things when they are made ready."

"Ah!" said the hare. "Well, I can do that work. I, the hare. If you will give me a little bit of it, I can make the food ready for your family."

"Oh!" said the lion, "that is good. I shall be glad to have somebody like you to do that work. I, myself, like that food, but I have no one to prepare it for me."

So the lion gave the food to the hare, and he went away a little distance to a pond, which was near that place, to wash the meat. As soon as he got into the path outside the lion's kraal, he found his grandmother standing by the way.

"Well, grandmother," said the hare, "are you here?"

The grandmother said, "Yes, my grandchild; I always stop in this place, as I am too old to walk any more. I always stay in the same place. I am hungry, for I cannot get anything to eat."

"Well," said the hare, "I have plenty of meat; plenty of flesh that my master, Mr. Lion, has killed. I am just going to wash this for him so that he may eat it."

Then the hare went to the pond and washed the meat, and when he came back he gave half of it to his grandmother.

But while the hare was going back to the lion's kraal he began to fear, and he thought, "The lion will be very angry with me, for I have only a little bit of the meat he gave me. I have given some of it to my grandmother. What shall I do? What can I do to deceive the lion?"

He stood in the path and thought. Then he went into the bush, and scratched himself against the thorns and the branches so that the blood came out over all his body, and then he went back to the lion's kraal with that little piece of the flesh.

When he came to the lion's kraal, the lion said, "Well, where is the meat? You took a lot of it, but there is only a little now. Where is the rest?"

The hare said: "Well, my master, at the pond where I went to wash the meat, there are many birds of prey, eagles and all kinds of birds of prey. As soon as they saw me with this flesh, they came and tried to take the flesh from me, and they scratched me all over like this. You see the blood is all over my body. They tried hard to take the flesh from me, and all that I could do was to lie down on the ground with this little piece of meat. They took away all the rest." The lion was deceived.

The next day, too, the same thing was done; but the lion began to think, and said to himself, "I must follow this Nwampfundla, the hare, and see how those birds of prey take the flesh from him."

So he went just behind the hare when he went to the pond to wash the meat. When he came into the path he saw the hare's grandmother, and he thought, "On, the hare is always deceiving me, saying that the birds of prey take the flesh away from him. He gives it to his grandmother." Then the lion killed the hare's grandmother, and hung her body upon a piece of wood, while the hare was going to the pond. Then he went back again to his kraal.

Soon the hare came and found his grandmother. It seemed as if she was laughing, for her mouth was open, showing her teeth. He said, "Oh! grandmother, why are you laughing?" He did not know that his grandmother was dead, but when he came close to her he saw that she was dead. So he took her and buried her, and went back to the lion's place.

The lion said, "Oh, to-day you did not find those birds of prey, for you bring back all the meat."

The hare said, "No, I did not go to the place where I used to go. I found another little place, and I went there to wash the meat." But he knew in his mind that it was the lion that had killed his grandmother, and when he saw the lion the tears came into his eyes. He did not like the lion to know that he was crying for his grandmother, so he went to the side of the fire where the smoke was, and stood in the smoke.

Then the lion said, "Why do you stay in the smoke?" The hare said, "Oh, I just want to sit here." And the smoke came into his eyes, and the tears ran down his nose. He did this because he did not want the lion to know that he was crying for his grandmother.

One day after this, he came to the lion and said, "Well, Mr. Lion, my master, I saw a good place down there where there are a lot of monkey-nuts. If you will go with me I can show you a lot of monkey-nuts, so that you can have some."

Then the lion went with the hare to that piece of ground where the monkey-nuts were. They came there and the hare said, "Oh, let me make a heap of grass so that we may burn it and have the ashes to cook the monkey-nuts in. You can just sit here in the shade. I am your servant; I will do all the work and will bring you the monkey-nuts when they are ready for eating."

By and bye the hare said, "Now they have to stay there a long time till they are cooked." Then, when the lion was asleep in the shade, the hare went behind him and dug a hole in the ground just behind the lion, and in the hole he found a big root. So he took the lion's tail and tied it to the root with a piece of cord, and the lion did not know what was done. The hare filled up the hole again.

Then he went back and took just a handful of the monkey-nuts and gave them to the lion. The lion did not know what had been done to him, and said, "I like these monkey-nuts, bring them all here." But the hare said, "Oh, no; I just gave you those to let you taste them. You may as well come here and eat in this place."

"No," said the lion, "I don't want to." And the lion was angry. Then the hare said, "Well, I have nothing to do with you. If you do not want to come here, it's all right. I'll eat all the monkey-nuts."

Then the lion said, "I'll give you something. I will beat you if you don't bring the monkey-nuts here."

"You may do that if you like," said the hare, "but I won't bring you the monkey-nuts."

Then the lion tried to stand up to go to beat the hare, but his tail was fastened tight behind. He tried and tried, but he could not, he could not go. He tried to turn behind to pull the root up, but he could not reach it with his paw. He could not go from that place.

Then the hare said: "You have killed my grandmother and that is why I have done this to you." And he began to cry aloud and shout and call the people saying, "Come, come all of you, and look at this gentleman here, this great mhunumuzana!"

Many people came together, and the lion was killed, and the hare ran away after the lion was killed. That is the end.

II.

ŊWAMPFUNDLA AND THE LEOPARD.

Ŋwampfundla, the hare, was running away, running as fast as he could, so fast that his feet threw up the sand—pff! pff!—behind him. . . . As he was running away as fast as he could, he found a leopard in the path, who was carrying a piece of meat in her mouth.

The hare stopped and stood still in the path, looking at the leopard.

"Oh, Mrs. Leopard," said the hare, "what are you carrying that piece of flesh for? Why don't you eat it?" The leopard answered, "I am taking it home, so that I can feed my cubs."

"Oh!" replied the hare, "why should you do the work of looking after your cubs? You should be like a lady and let somebody do that work for you. You may just as well give me that work. Let me have charge of your cubs. I can keep them very well indeed. I have been a servant of the lion. I used to look after the lion's cubs. I can take care of your cubs for you. If you let me look after them they will get on so well that they will be as big as you are just in no time."

The leopard said, "Oh, I am very glad indeed to find someone like you to do this work for me. You can look after my cubs for me. Your words are good."

So the leopard gave the hare the piece of flesh to carry, and went and showed him the place where the cubs were lying asleep in a hollow tree.

"Oh!" said the hare, when he saw them, "this is not the best place to keep cubs in. You must take them out and go and put them in a good, comfortable place."

So the hare took those cubs out of the hollow tree and put them in a good place. Now the leopard used to give the hare some flesh for the cubs every day, and the hare took care of the cubs and fed them. The leopard used to hunt and to sleep. After a long time the leopard said to the hare, "Hare, I want to have a look at my cubs."

So the hare went with the leopard to the place where the cubs were, and took one and brought it and showed it to the leopard, and the leopard said, "Oh, you spoke the truth when you said that they would grow quickly. You keep them well. They are nice." There were four.

After the next day, the hare went and caught one of the cubs and killed it, and ate the flesh, keeping only one foot. By and bye, when he saw the leopard coming from hunting, the hare called the leopard and said, "Oh! my mistress, I told you that I would keep your cubs well. To-day I saw this, when I was taking them to walk outside. A young buck passed by in the bush and they saw it, and ran and caught it, and now they can get food for themselves. They caught a buck this morning and now they can kill their own food. I kept just one part of the buck this morning. Would you like to have it?"

"Yes," said the leopard; "yes, indeed. I should be pleased to have something that has been caught by my cubs." But she did not know that she would have part of one of her own cubs.

The hare took the meat and gave it to the leopard and the leopard ate it.

The next day the hare took another, and there were two left. He did the same the next day, giving a part of it to the mother, saying that it was part of a buck that the cubs had caught, and the mother was deceived all the time.

Then, when there was only one cub left, the leopard came and asked to see her cubs. So the hare said, "Certainly, but there is no need to go all the way to the place where the cubs are. I am your servant, and I will bring the cubs to you." So the leopard sat down in the shade of a big tree and the hare went off to fetch the cubs. But three had been eaten, and there was only one left. So he took that one that was left and brought it to the leopard, who took much pleasure in seeing it. Then the leopard said, "Where are the others, hare? Let me see them all."

"Yes," said the hare, "certainly you shall see them all; but I have taken such good care of them and they have grown

so big, as, indeed, I told you they would, that they are now so heavy that I can only carry one at a time."

"Good," said the leopard, "bring the others."

So the hare took back the cub that he had brought, as if he was going to fetch the others, but he had eaten them. So he brought back the same cub each time to the leopard, until the leopard thought that she had seen all her four children. "Thank you, hare," said the leopard, "you have kept my cubs very well."

But the next day the hare killed that cub also and then they were all finished. There were none left. Then the hare began to make a hole in the ground when the leopard had gone away to hunt, and while she was away hunting, the hare took the assegais of the leopard, and put them on the top of a burrow, and when the leopard came, she said, "You, hare, what are you doing with my assegais?"

"Oh!" said the hare "I'm not doing anything. I am just sitting here."

Then the leopard said, "Why didn't you come to meet me, to take the flesh for my cubs?"

"Oh!" said the hare, "I don't like to meet you."

"Why not?" asked the leopard.

"Oh," replied the hare, "you had better feed your cubs yourself. I don't want to feed them any more."

"Well," said the leopard, "all right. Go and show me where my cubs are, and I will feed them if you don't want to."

"Ah!" said the hare, "you used to eat your cubs!"

"What!" said the leopard.

"Yes, every day you had part of a cub for breakfast, every day a paw of one of your cubs. What kind of flesh did you have every day?"

"If you don't go at once and show me where my cubs are I'll kill you," said the leopard.

"Oh," laughed the hare, "you will kill me, will you? Your cubs are all finished. They are all eaten. You have eaten them all. I did not eat alone. You had a piece of each of them."

"But you told me that they were young bucks," growled the leopard.

"Oh! no, no!" cried the hare. "Oh! no, no; not at all!"

Then the leopard was very angry, and she glared at the hare, and lashed her tail, and leaped at the hare, who threw one of the assegais at the leopard. Then the leopard took the assegai and tried to catch the hare, but the hare ran quickly inside the hole, and just when the leopard put her nose into the hole and tried to catch the hare, the hare came out of another hole near by and threw another assegai at the leopard. When the leopard rushed to that hole, the hare ran inside again with another assegai, and, coming out of the first hole, threw assegais at the leopard until she was dead. That is the end.

III.

ŊWAMPFUNDLA AND THE BUCK.

After Mr. Hare had killed the leopard, he went away. Now as he was going down the path, he met a buck, who was walking slowly along, eating here and eating there.

"Good morning, Mr. Buck!" said he.

"Oh," said the buck, looking up and seeing the hare, "Good morning. What do you want with me? I don't know you."

"I want you to help me to make some gardens," said the hare. The buck agreed to this plan, and they went and found a good place and made some gardens, clearing the bush and grass away. When the ground was made ready, they planted some beans.

Now every day they used to go to the gardens, early in the morning to look at the gardens, and to see that the wild pigs and the other animals did not come to spoil them.

Soon the beans began to come up, the little green shoots piercing through the ground. But the buck was greedy, and he did not want to wait until the beans were properly grown; so he used to eat the beans while they were still growing, going back to the garden every night after the hare had gone to his kraal, and eating up the young leaves.

But the hare did not do this, for the hare was wise. He said, "No, I must wait until the beans are ripe, and then I shall have plenty."

But just when the beans were beginning to get ripe the buck came and stole in the night, and it was not long before the hare saw what was being done.

He said to himself: "Ah! there is somebody who comes to my garden and eats up my beans. I do not know who it is. I must keep watch. I must find out who eats my beans."

So the next time that he and the buck went to the gardens together, he showed the buck what had been done, and the buck said: "That is bad; some bad one comes and eats our beans. I see that that is true, but for myself I do not know who it is."

"Well," said the hare, "we must do something, or all our beans will be stolen. It is not the wild pigs, for I do not see their spoor. We had better come to-morrow and make a pit, and put some sharp stakes in it, so that the thief, when he comes in the night, may fall into the pit and get caught on the sharp points of the stakes. Can't you come and help me in this work?"

"Oh, yes!" said the buck. "It is a good plan. I shall be glad to help you, for I myself also want to have some beans." So they went away. Now the hare was very clever; he was the cleverest of all the beasts that are in the bush, so he did not wait for the buck to help him, but he went back to the garden that same night, and dug that pit, and put some sharp stakes in it. Then he went home and went to sleep.

Now in the night the buck said to himself: "The hare says we will make that pit to-morrow. I had better go to-night, before the pit is made, and have a good feed of those beans."

So he came from his kraal, walking quietly in the paths. It was very dark, and there was no moon, and all the stars were hidden behind the clouds, so in the dark he fell into the pit that the hare had already made. The sharp stakes went into his hind-quarters and the buck jumped out, leaving the mark of blood upon the stakes. Then he went home and lay down. The wounds hurt him very much.

Early next morning, while the sun was still low, the hare went to the garden, and saw what had happened there in the night.

"Oh!" said he, "somebody has been here. Look at that blood on the stakes, and look at that spoor in the sand. I have caught that buck who eats my beans!"

Then he took a piece of stick with the mark of blood on it, and he went to the kraal of the buck, and said to him, "Look at this! Somebody has been to my garden in the night, and has fallen into the pit that I made. Just look at the blood! I nearly caught him. I do not know how he got out of the pit again."

The buck said, "Oh, I do not know who it is."

Then the hare said, "What is the matter with you that you lie so stiff, and look so ill? You were quite well yesterday."

"Oh," said the buck, "I caught fever yesterday. I have caught a chill."

"Well," said the hare, "that's all right. It is a good thing that I came to see you, for I have some medicine that I can give you, if you like."

"Thank you, very much," answered the buck; "I shall be thankful if you will do so."

So the hare went and took a large piece of a broken waterpot, and put some dry leaves in it, and poured some fresh water on them, and made a fire and put the pot on the fire.

Then he said to the buck, "Now this is the way to cure a cold. If we go into the steam and cover ourselves with blankets, we shall soon get well. I will have the medicine too, for I think I have caught a little cold also."

"Very well," replied the buck; "who will be first?"

"Oh, I will," said the hare. "I don't mind being the first. When I say 'Open!' you must open the blankets as quickly as you can, when I feel the heat of the medicine."

So the hare went in. Soon he called out, "Open for me!" and the buck opened the covering of the blankets, and the hare came out. Then the buck went in, and stayed for some minutes inside. Then he said, "Please open for me!" and the hare opened the blankets, and the buck came out.

As soon as the buck had come out, the hare took some pieces of wood and made a big fire, and said, "Well, I want to go in while this pot is boiling."

So he went in, and was covered by the blankets. Now as soon as the hare saw that the water wanted to boil, he cried out "Open!" and the buck let him come out.

He then put some more wood on the fire, and said, "Now, Mr. Buck, it's your turn again, come in."

"No," said the buck, "the pot will soon boil!"

"No, no!" cried the hare, "that is quite a mistake; there is plenty of time before the water boils; just come in for a little minute! I want you to get quite well!"

So the buck went in, and the hare covered him up. Then the water boiled, and the steam scalded the buck, and he was in great pain, because he was scalded by the steam, and he cried out in a loud voice, "Oh, Mr. Hare, open quickly for me; let me get out. I can't bear the heat here!"

"Oh, no!" said the hare. "You must pay me for my beans." And the buck died. He died there in that hot water. That is the end.

IV.

SWAMPFUNDLA AND THE HORN.

After the buck was dead, the hare skinned the buck, and took the large bone of one of the legs. He took this bone and made it hollow, and used it as a horn for blowing. He tried to blow with that horn, and it blew very well, so that people a long way off could hear the noise of the horn that the hare made out of the bone of the leg of the buck.

Then the hare went and found a piece of a calabash, and he took that piece of the calabash, and put some fat in it. He used it to keep some fat in. When he wanted the fat, he used to take it out of that piece of the calabash.

Then he went to the bank of the river, and he put the piece of calabash that had the fat in it down on the bank of the river, and he sat down on the grass beside the calabash. Then he began to blow the horn, making a noise "Ti-ti-ti" with that bone.

Now when he made that noise with the horn, all the animals in the bush heard the noise that he made; and as soon as he began to blow the horn, a great number of bucks that were in the bush heard the noise of the horn, and they said, "Ho! what is this? Somebody is blowing a horn; there is a dance somewhere! Let us go and see where is this dance at the kraal of the horn-blower."

So the bucks went and came to the place on the bank of the river where the hare was blowing the horn.

As soon as they came out of the bush, the hare tried to hide the horn, putting it in the grass where he was sitting, and he took up the calabash of fat from the ground, as if he had been washing himself, and was about to rub himself with the fat.

Then the bucks saw the hare sitting on the bank, and they came to him, and said: "Shawan, good morning, Mr. Hare; where does this sound of the blowing of the horn come from?"

this sound of dancing that we heard just now. We heard a lovely sound of dancing; where is the dancing?"

The hare said: "Oh! I can tell you that: it is just by the West. I heard the sound myself also; but I was washing, and I want to rub myself with this fat that you see here in this calabash."

"Thank you," said the bucks; "we will go to the West and see where is this dancing. We should very much like to be there." So they passed to that place.

Now as soon as the bucks were gone to look for the place of the dancing, the hare put away the calabash of fat and found his trumpet again, and began to blow it, making a loud noise, "Ti-ti-ti!" with the bone.

Then all kinds of animals came running to that place where the hare was blowing the trumpet, all kinds of animals, lions and elephants, and hippopotami, and leopards, and hares, and lizards, and all kinds of animals. They all came to the place where the hare was sitting blowing that trumpet. But as soon as the hare saw that the animals were coming out of the bush, he hid the bone in the grass, and took the calabash of fat, and pretended to rub himself with the fat.

Then the animals came to him and said: "Good morning, Mr. Hare, can you tell us where is that dancing? We have heard a great noise of a trumpet and we want to know where is the dancing, for we want to go there."

"Oh, yes," said the hare, "I can tell you; it is just over there on the West. I have heard that noise of the trumpet, and I myself am going to that dancing. I have just been getting ready to go. You see that I am rubbing myself with this fat so as to look nice when I go to that dancing."

"Thank you," said the animals; and they went away to look for the place where the dancing was to be.

Then there came a kwahle, an iguana, walking slowly, slowly, and not making any noise. She walked in the grass behind the hare. She was trying to find out where was the noise of the trumpet.

When he thought that all the animals had gone, the hare put down the calabash of fat, and took out the bone again and began to blow, making a noise, "Ti-ti-ti!" But as soon as he began to blow, the iguana came quietly, quietly, in the grass, and snatched the bone from the mouth of the hare, and went quickly inside the river.

"Oh!" shouted the hare, "give me back my horn!" He jumped up, and began to dance about on the bank, he was so angry. But the iguana looked out of the water and laughed at him.

"You silly thing," said she; "you just play with the big people. You try to make fools of them, telling them to go to the West to a big dancing, while all the time there is no dancing at all; but it is only you sitting there blowing a horn. You are wicked; I will throw this horn away!"

Then the iguana swam across the river to a big stone, and came out of the water on to the top of the stone, and sat down, and began to try to blow the trumpet. But she could not blow it. She only made a little noise, "Pff! pff!"

"He wene!" shouted the hare. "You fellow, don't put your mouth on my bone!"

The iguana was all this time trying to blow the horn, but she could not. She only made a little noise, "Pff! pff!"

Then the hare went round to where the iguana was, swimming in the water, and came out on the other side of the river.

Then the hare came back to that side, chasing the iguana. Then the hare said to himself, "What plan can I make to get back my horn again? I can't find this iguana; it always goes inside the water, and I can't swim underneath the water."

So the hare went away and got some birdlime, and went to the place where the iguana used to sit and warm herself in the sun. He spread the birdlime all over that place, and when he had done so, he went to the side of the river where the iguana was, and tried to take the horn from her.

Then the iguana dived into the water, and came out on the other side, to the place where she used to sit to warm herself in the sun. Then she came out of the water and sat down on the top of the birdlime that the hare had put there. The hare stayed where he was on the other side of the river, drying his coat in the sun, and waiting till the birdlime could have time to catch the iguana.

He shouted across the water: "Just you give me that bone of mine!" The iguana said, "Oh! no, I won't. You want to get my bone and play tricks on the big animals, on the chiefs and gentlemen!"

The hare said, "I think that I will soon find that bone of mine. Wait a bit. I think that I will soon find it."

"No you won't," said the iguana.

"You wait a bit," said Nwampfundla. "You wait a bit. You will soon see I will find it!"

The hare was only waiting for the sun to dry the iguana's feet, so that the birdlime could stick. By and bye the feet were dry, and the birdlime got hold of the feet of the iguana, and then the hare went round to where the iguana was. When the hare came to the iguana it was stuck fast and could not move.

"Now," said the hare, "I told you that I would soon find my trumpet." And he took the bone from the iguana's hands, and went away. And as he was going away the iguana cried out after him, "Oh, Mr. Hare, can't you take me out of this birdlime?"

"What's that?" said the hare, stopping and turning round; "take you out of the birdlime? No, I can't. You are such a repulsive object that I can't even put my hands on you. I do

not want to touch dirty things like you. You had better stay there."

Then the iguana said, "I am not dirty; I wash myself every day."

"I can't help that," replied the hare, "you may wash yourself every day, but you are so dirty that I cannot touch you."

Now the iguana was crying all the time, and begging the hare to help her.

"No," said the hare, "I don't know what to do. My hands are so very clean. You had better stop where you are."

Then the hare went away into the bush, playing on the trumpet and making a great noise, "Ti-ti-ti." And he played the same tricks again. That is the end.

V.

ŊWAMPFUNDLA AND THE ELEPHANT.

The lion is the chief of all the animals. He is the great chief of all the animals that are in the bush. He is chief even over the elephants, though they are bigger than he. There is no beast of them all that does not say, "Bayete. Hosi!" when they meet him in the path. Now, as everybody knows, it is not good for a chief, even a little chief, a hosana, to be alone. Every one of them has his indunas, and his servants. Is it not so?

Very well, the lion, who was the big chief of all the animals, had many servants. They were all servants of the lion, the chief of all the animals.

Now Ŋwampfundla, the Hare, was the servant of the great chief, the lion. He went with him to all the places where he went. He did all things that his master, the lion, told him to do.

Now one day the lion said, "Let us go from this place. Let us pass through the lands to another place."

So all the animals who were the servants of the lion took their mats and the things that they wanted for the journey, and they went away from the kraal of the lion.

Now they went all walking together. There were many of them. The servants of the lion were very many, for he was a great chief. By and bye they came to a very fruitful country, and soon before dark they came to a place where there was a big *inweba*, a nice fruit tree. It had plenty of good fruit on it. So the tinduna, the attendants of the lion, said to him, "O Hosi, Chief, here is a good place. Here is plenty of good fruit. Let us stop in this place. It is a good place for us to stop in. Let us pass the night here. We can sleep here very nicely." So their master the lion looked at the place, and when he saw the *inweba* tree he

said, "Yes, your talk is good. We will stop in this place. You must leave that fruit for me. That will be for me to eat, but you, my servants, may eat anything else that is in this place, only leave the fruit of this tree for me."

So they all put down the things that they were carrying, and began to make ready to pass the night in that place.

Now just before it got dark, just when all the animals were getting ready to sleep, the hare went to the headmen and said, "I have been thinking about something."

"Yes," said they, "what is it, O Nwampfundla the hare?"

"Well," said the hare, "I am not quiet in my mind about that tree with the fruit, which our master the lion says must only be for him."

"Oh! what about that? Everybody knows the will of our master. What then?"

"Well," said the hare, "I do not want to get into any trouble. Suppose somebody gets up in the night and steals the fruit of the tree? Things like that do happen sometimes, you know. If such a thing should happen, I know that you would say, 'Oh, it is Nwampfundla the hare who has done this thing.'"

"Why should you think that?" said the tinduna.

"Well, there is something in my mind that says it," said the hare. "But I have a good plan. Do you see that old wooden mortar that they use for stamping corn? I will tell you what to do. You had better cover me with that old mortar, and then I shall be safe inside it, and if anything happens in the night everyone will know that it cannot be I, for I shall be shut up in the mortar."

"Very well," said the tinduna. They laughed at the hare, but they took the mortar, and turned it upside down, and covered the hare with it, so that he was quite shut up in the mortar. Then all the animals went to sleep, sleeping there in the bush, in the place where was the *niwebe* tree.

Now in the night, when all the animals were asleep, the hare lifted up the side of the mortar, and looked out. He did it very quietly. He looked out on this side, and the other side, and on every side, but everything was still, for all the animals were asleep.

Then, when he saw that all were asleep, he came out of the mortar very quietly, and he went to a place where they had left a basket, and he took the basket. Then he stood still to listen. He could hear the breathing of the animals as they slept, but none moved, they were all asleep, for they had eaten much of the fruits of the other trees that the lion had given them, and they were all asleep.

So the hare climbed up the tree quietly, going up a little bit, and listening, and then going up another little bit and listening again. But there was no movement among the beasts, they were all fast asleep.

Then the hare came to the branches where the fruit was, and he began to eat the fruit as fast as he could, eating all the fruit, and putting all the stones of the fruit into the basket that he had taken with him.

When he had eaten up all the fruit, the basket was full of stones. Then he came down quietly, and went among the animals, walking very softly, until he came to the place where the elephant was. The elephant was fast asleep. So the hare hung the stones of the fruit that he had eaten in a bag behind the ears of the elephant. (N.B.—A necessary variation here.) Then he went back again into the mortar, and covered himself up and went to sleep.

Now early in the morning all the animals awoke, and warmed themselves in the sun. By and bye they heard the hare scratching inside the mortar, crying, "Can't you please open for me? I want to see the sunshine."

They said, "Oh, we have forgotten about you." Then one of them lifted up the mortar, and the hare came out.

The hare came and stood before the lion and said, "Shawan, Hosi, good morning, my lord!" Then he looked up at the *ñwebe* tree, and cried out, "Oh.....! I said last night that you must put me inside that mortar. Was it not true? Just look at that tree, the tree of our master the lion. Just look at it! Where is the fruit? It is all gone; someone has eaten it up! If I had not been shut up in the mortar all the night you would think that I had done it!"

Then all the animals looked up at the tree, and saw that all the fruit was eaten up, and they were very much afraid. And the lion was very angry, so angry that all the animals quaked.

The lion told all the animals to come together, and he tried to find out who had taken the fruit, but none of them could say who it was. The lion could not find out who had done it.

Then the hare came and stood just in front of the lion, and said, "Please, my master, may I speak?"

The lion said, "Speak!"

Then the hare said, "I will tell you a plan to find out the one who did this, eating the fruit of our master in the night."

"Oh," said the lion, "what is your plan?"

"I will tell you," said the hare; "but first tell the animals to help me, and to do what I tell them."

Then the lion ordered all the animals to do what the hare should tell them to do, so that the one might be found who had eaten the fruit of the tree.

So they dug a big, long pit. Now when the pit was finished, the hare said, "Now let everybody jump over this place here. If we all do so, we shall find out who took the fruit of the tree, eating the tree of our master."

"Very well," said the lion, "I myself, your master, will also jump." So the lion jumped first. Nothing happened.

Then the hare jumped, and nothing happened.

After that the leopard jumped. Nothing happened.

After him all the animals jumped, and still nothing happened.

At last the elephant was the only one left. The elephant jumped, and when he jumped the stones of the fruit of the tree fell down on the ground, falling from behind his ears.

Then the hare jumped up and said, "Look at this fellow! Look at the stones of the fruit that he has eaten! I told you we should find out who ate the tree."

The elephant said, "Myself, I do not know how these stones came here. I did not eat the fruit. How could I climb a tree to get the fruit?"

But the animals did not believe him. They all thought that he had eaten the tree of their chief the lion.

Then the hare said, "What a shame for a big fellow like you to steal the things of the chief!"

The lion said, "Kill him!"

So they caught the elephant and killed him, and gave the hare some of the flesh to carry to the chief's kraal. That is the end.

VI.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF Nwampfundla.

While the animals, servants of the great chief the lion, were going away from the place of the *nwebe* tree, where the fruit of the lion had been stolen by the hare, and the elephant had been killed for the hare's fault, Nwampfundla the hare was carrying a large piece of the elephant's flesh.

Now the hare, although he is very clever, is, as indeed you know, only a little animal. So as he was walking in the path, carrying the flesh of the elephant, that piece of flesh became too heavy for him. He was very tired, for the flesh was too heavy on his shoulders. And, also, he began to be very sorry in his heart because of the elephant who had been killed because of him, although he had not done any wrong. He was very sorry for the elephant that was dead. So as he walked behind the other animals, carrying the heavy piece of flesh, he was crying, saying, "They have killed my friend the elephant, but he did not eat the tree. He had no fault, the elephant my friend. They just killed him for nothing. It was I, Nwampfundla the hare, who ate the tree of our master the lion."

Now the animals who were walking in front heard the hare crying and saying something, but they did not understand what he was saying, for they were far in front of him.

Then the lion stopped and cried out in a loud voice, "Hare, you hare, come near, and walk close to us, I do not want you to walk so far behind."

"Oh, my master," said the hare, "this piece of meat is too heavy for me. It is a very large piece, and I myself am not big. It is too heavy for me to carry. If I must carry it I cannot walk fast enough to keep near you. It is too heavy for me."

So the lion gave the large piece of flesh to one of the other animals to carry, and gave the hare a little piece that he could carry better.

But soon the hare was walking a long way behind the other animals again, crying and saying, "They have killed my friend the elephant. I weep for my friend the elephant. They have killed him, although he had no fault. He did not eat the tree of our master the lion. It was I, the hare, who ate the tree. The elephant had no fault."

Then the lion found that the hare was again walking a long way behind. He heard the hare talking, but he could not hear what he said, he was so far behind in the path.

So the lion again called to the hare, saying, "Come near, you hare, why do you walk so far behind in the path? Come close and walk near the other animals, my servants."

And the hare said, "Well, my master, I cannot walk as fast as the other animals, for this piece of meat is too heavy for me."

Then the chief gave him his assegais to carry, saying, "Hare, carry these assegais; they are not too heavy. Now you must walk with the other animals. I cannot have you walking behind us in the path. Go before me."

So the hare walked in the path in front of the lion. Now as he was walking in the path in front of the lion, he kept on singing the song that he had made about the elephant, saying, "Oh, they killed my friend the elephant, but he had done no wrong thing. They killed him, but he had not eaten the fruit of the tree of our chief. It was I, Nwampfundla the hare, who ate the tree of the chief."

Now the lion heard what the hare was singing, and he began to ask the hare about it.

"What!" said the lion, "was it you that ate my tree?"

"Yes, chief," said the hare. "I am very sorry because you have killed my poor friend the elephant, who had no fault at all. It was I myself, the hare, that ate your tree."

"Oh, is that so?" cried the lion. "Catch him, you people!"

But when they tried to catch him, the hare ran away quickly. He ran away as fast as he could run, and all the animals ran after him, trying to catch him.

Soon the hare saw a hole in the ground, and ran into it, and the animals came to the hole, and they said to the lion, "Chief, the hare is here, in this hole in the ground. We saw him go into it."

"Oh," said the lion, "that's all right. We shall soon catch him now. Get him out of the hole."

So they went into the bush and cut a long stick, with a hook at the end of it, and they came back, and put the stick into the hole, so as to pull out the hare, who was in that hole.

They put in the stick, and as soon as they put it in, the hook caught hold of one of the hare's legs.

Then, when he saw that the hook had caught his leg, the hare laughed, and said to them, "Oh, you can do what you like. You will never catch me like this, you have caught hold of a root. Pull as much as you like, you are only pulling at a root." He just laughed at them, and said, "Pull, pull all of you, it is only a root."

Then they took out the stick, and put it in again, trying to get hold of the hare. This time the hook caught in a root inside the hole. Then, when he saw that the hook was fast round the root, the hare began to cry and weep, and ask for pardon. Then they thought that they had caught him, and the lion came to help them, and they all pulled with all their strength, all the animals, folding one another, until the hook at the end of the stick broke, and all the animals fell down on top of one another on their backs on the ground. Then the lion was very angry, and he told the hare all the things he would do to him when he caught him.

After that they cut another stick, a long one, and the same things were done again. They caught the foot of the hare, and he laughed at them. Then they thought, "We cannot have got hold of the hare for he cannot laugh when we catch him."

So they tried again. This time they caught a piece of root, and the hare cried out and wept, saying, "Oh, please pardon me! I will come out if you will only stop pulling. My leg will break. Please stop pulling. You are hurting me very much."

Then all the animals came to that piece of stick, and they all pulled as hard as they could, and the hook broke, and they all of them fell backward again on the ground.

Then the lion became exceedingly angry; his first anger was as nothing compared to this. He spoke, and all the animals trembled. But the hare in the hole only laughed at them, saying, "Do what you like, you cannot catch me. I, the hare, am greater than you all." He did this until they got tired of him.

Then the lion said, "We will leave this miserable hare in the hole. He went into the hole. Let him stop in it. Bring plenty of grass, and shut up the hole, so that he cannot get out. Let him be made fast in the hole. That will teach him to try to play with me."

So they took some grass, and shut up the hole, and went away. Now when they were gone, the hare tried to pull away the grass that was shutting the hole, but there was so much, and the animals had put it in so tight, that he could not. He was

shut in the hole. Now by and bye the hare began to be very hungry in that hole. He had nothing to eat. He became hungry and hungry and more hungry, until at last he ate one of his own ears. He was so hungry and he had nothing to eat.

But by and bye he began to be hungry again. He had nothing to eat, so this time he ate one of his legs. He was so hungry that he ate one of his legs.

Then he became very thirsty. His mouth and his throat were all hot and dry, and there was no water in that hole. There was nothing for him to drink. So he took one of his eyes, thinking that because the tears had come out of his eyes he would find some water in his eye to drink.

Then, when the hare had eaten his ear and his leg and his eye, there came a big storm of wind. And in this great storm of wind the grass was blown out of the mouth of the hole in which the hare was.

Soon Nwampfundla could see outside. He came out, and looked around carefully, but there was nobody there. He could not see anybody. Then he went to a beehive that he found in a tree near by, and took some of the wax that was there, and made two little horns of that wax, and put them on his head, so that it appeared that he had two little horns growing on his head. Then he went to the place where the king lives.

Now when the king saw him, he called all the animals, and said to them, "Who is this strange person that comes here?"

Then they said, "Oh, chief, this seems to be that hare that went inside the hole and mocked you."

Then the hare said, "What, was that hare like me? I did not know that there was another hare like me. Was that hare lame in one foot? Was he blind in one eye? Was he without one ear? Had he two little horns growing on his head?"

Then the animals all said, "No, the hare that went into the hole was not like this one."

"No," said the hare, "I thought not. The fact is that I belong to a special tribe of hares. We are not like the ordinary hares that you see every day. We are a special kind of hare. We are all just like I am, with three legs and one ear and one eye. But know this all of you, that I am cleverer than any other hare. I know how to run faster with three feet than anyone that you ever saw; I can see farther than anyone else with one eye; I can hear better than anyone of you, with one ear. I can wait upon chiefs better than anyone else can."

Then the lion was pleased to see a hare like that. He had never seen a hare of that tribe of hares before. He was very pleased to see this new kind of hare that could do all these things with fewer legs and ears and eyes than other people. So the lion said, "Well, hare, you had better be my servant. If you can do all these things you had better do them for me. You can be my servant." So the hare became the servant of the lion again. That is the end.